

Idaho Trade Token Newsletter

Boise, Idaho

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News

"Eagle Eye" Dean Rasmussen recently asked about the small "s" at the bottom of the obverse of the J. E. Smith tokens from Arco. Was it a diesinker's mark, a "mintmark", or just what? Truthfully, I had never noticed the letter; does anyone have a theory? Have you seen another similar mark? The one I have spotted not infrequently is the small "w" at the bottom reverse of round brass holed tokens: GOOD FOR 5¢ IN TRADE / W. I have always thought this letter was merely a decorative ornament, but it could also be a diesinker mark. Any ideas?

Dean is working on a listing of all Idaho encased coins. Please contact him with your holdings so he can have as complete a list as possible. He would also appreciate any whetstone updates as well.

Southern Idaho Coin Club member Bill Gleixner has developed a very specialized interest in the tokens of the nationwide Chuck E. Cheese and Pizza Time Theatre pizza franchises. He has found many varieties and is working on a listing, so if you have any, please advise him (telephone 208-342-7141 or e-mail Boise.Gleixners@worldnet.att.net) or mail me and I will send it on.

Did you see the article in the news media about the court ruling that a hoard of 96 gold coins found in Bellevue belong to the property owner? They were unearthed by workers building a driveway. One of the workers, Gregory Corliss, sued property owner Jann Wenner, publisher of *Rolling Stone* magazine, for possession of the coins. His legal team cited the treasure trove doctrine of English common law, or "finders-keepers". Idaho District Judge James May rejected this argument and gave possession to Wenner.

As some of you already know, I am in the process of changing Internet service providers. I have been using Micron Internet Service for about a year, and have been very satisfied with them. My employer, however, has offered an employee discount on the Internet service it sells. So, for purely economic reasons, I am changing. Even though most ISPs claim to add value to the Internet, what they add is stuff I seldom use. My needs are simply local, non-busy access numbers, support of a web browser I like, and (to meet future plans) home page space. Thus, the change. The effect you will see is my e-mail address changing to: tokens@uswest.net

For years my assumption was that general merchandise and grocery stores used tokens in one of two ways. They purchased produce from area farmers, paying them either in tokens or a lesser amount in cash. This is the "butter & egg money" we have heard about. The other way was when the business advanced credit to a good customer. The store ledger would reflect the amount of the loan, and the borrower would receive the amount in tokens, supposedly only to be spent at the store. (Often, they were "good" all over town, since everyone had to eat.) I recently found a newspaper ad hinting at a third way tokens were used. The Riverside Mercantile Company of American Falls stated that "We give you a 5 per cent trade discount". I take this to mean that if you bought \$6 in goods from them, you would receive 30¢ in tokens to use next time in the store.

I am embarrassed to say, but I don't remember which one of you pointed out the mavericks from Herman's Place in LaGrande, Oregon that say "Play Where Your Hickeys Buy Eats". The area using the word "hickey" for a trade token is expanding, but still seems concentrated in ID, NV, & OR.

Tillotson's

Civil War veteran Silas Tillotson moved from his Michigan birthplace to Indiana, Kansas, and Montana before finally coming to Idaho in 1892. Along the way, a son, Asa Erwin Tillotson, was born in Manhattan, KS on January 13, 1878 to Silas and Mary E. Tillotson.

The young Tillotson worked in Boise area orchards and as a carpenter during the construction of the Swan Falls power plant south of Kuna. From 1900 to 1903 he worked as an electrician for the Capital Electric Light Co. In 1904 he went into business with Ernest H. Frazer, opening the Boise City Bakery & Grocery at 207 N. 8th Street, site of the present-day Mode Building. On February 4, 1906, Asa Tillotson married Zella Irene Pearce. In 1907 Tillotson left Frazer to run the Boise City Bakery & Grocery alone and opened a magazine, fruit and confectionery business at 301 North 8th Street. This corner is now the site of the Hoff Building, built as the Hotel Boise in 1930. The 5¢ Tillotson & Frazer token, #BO-15, is 21mm brass and is known in only four examples. Other denominations seem likely from a bakery and grocery business.



In 1920 Tillotson moved across the street to 225 North 8th Street, or 801 West Bannock as it is now designated ("kitty kornor from the Post Office"), and opened a sporting goods store and lunch counter. In 1936 he opened a second store, "Tillotson's No. 2" at 829 Main Street. He was obviously fond of corner locations as this second location was at the corner of 9th and Main St.

An interesting group of tokens is known from Tillotson's. Square tokens from Idaho are not too common, but triangular ones are very unusual. #BO-15(B) is 23mm aluminum and is known

in 5 examples. Only two of the 29mm high triangular aluminum #BO-15(C) tokens are known. The 21mm round plated brass #BO-15(A) piece is relatively common with about 12 known.

Meet Your Friends at

TILLOTSON'S

SERVICE



Unexcelled Lunches
and
Fountain Service

STORE NO. 1

(Kitty Korner from Postoffice)

STORE NO. 2

Located at Ninth and Main. (Open all Night)

Free!

This ticket and its receipt can
be used to get the 5¢ in Tokens at
TILLOTSON'S No. 1 or 2

Don't Fail To

Use This Coupon

This Offer Expires March 15

The ad shown at the left is from the back cover of the Spring, 1937 issue of **Chuckles**, Boise High Schools "Big Book of Bunk", a joke book with student and faculty names inserted in the one-liners. Tillotson's ad is by far the largest, reflecting his popularity at Boise High School. The ticket at the lower left and 5¢ buys a milk shake.

Asa Tillotson's obituary states that he retired upon selling both businesses after being in business for 30 years. At this point, I believe that his tenure in business was more like 40 years as the telephone directory for February, 1946 lists "Tillotson's - see Heller's Coffee Shop" and "Tillotson's Sporting Goods Store - see McCall's Sporting Goods". The store at 8th and Bannock, was sold to Paul F. Brooks who operated McCall's Sporting Goods there featuring the same lunch counter as the previous proprietor. It was a popular eating and meeting place for Boise High School

students and downtown employees. This building housed a number of businesses since then, including Reilly's mens' clothing and the present Shabahang Persian Carpets store.

The No. 2 store was sold to Robert W. Heller, owner of a competing sporting goods store and lunch counter at 224 North 10th Street. Heller used tokens in his businesses as well.

I have a small collection of advertising holders for fishing and hunting licenses. They are made of canvas with a rubberized lining to waterproof them. The one shown came with a 1933 Idaho fishing license as issued by Tillotson's. I have another which says Tillotson & Son Sporting Goods Co.; the son was Robert E. Tillotson who, with his wife, built and operated for many years a successful real estate and property management business in the Boise area.



Mottern's of Worley

Surfing the Internet recently, I was reading genealogical queries and spotted one on the Kootenai County list. It had been posted by a Hugh Mottern, seeking information on the Mottern family at Harrison. Since the name is not common and Harrison is pretty close to Worley, I sent off an e-mail to him asking if he knew anything of the name Mottern in Worley. The token which led me to this question is rubbed at the right. Unfortunately, this token is an "unknown" at this point. It was owned by the late Ford Knight of Missoula, MT.

Ford was murdered during a robbery of his pawn shop many years ago; his token collection was part of the loot taken, and it was never recovered. This rubbing is the best image I have of the token; no other examples have been reported.



Anyway, it was not long before I got an e-mail message back directing me to Jim Mottern who was the expert on Motterns of Worley. Soon after e-mailing Jim, he called and shared much information on his grandfather's family. He most generously mailed me excerpts from his book on the family and gave permission to include portions here. The book is **The Family History of James Montgomery and Nancy Amanda Mottern** which he privately published in 1995. Copies are available at \$30. directly from Jim Mottern. He is still interested in finding more Mottern information - if you know of any, please call him at (949)794-2401 or e-mail jim.mottern@ey.com.

After the Civil War, James Montgomery Mottern returned to Sullivan County, TN, married, and took up farming. It was a difficult living and "after earning 25 cents for plowing all day behind a mule, James Montgomery threw down the reins and stomped off, saying that he would be dammed if he was going to stay in Tennessee and starve". Having heard of the opportunities at Rockford, Washington from a nephew who had homesteaded there, Mottern walked 300 miles to Louisville, KY, caught a train, and went to Rockford in Washington Territory. "When he had established himself in Rockford, he returned to Tennessee and escorted his wife and six children to their new home." James Montgomery Mottern died suddenly of a heart attack on March 16, 1893, leaving his widow and eight children.

Charles Adolphus Mottern was 16 when his father died. As the oldest son, he had to work from an early age at the Rockford Mercantile Company to support his family. By 1917 he and the fifth brother, David Allen, became partners in the Mottern Brothers Furniture Store in Rockford. After Dave returned from a stint in the Navy, the brothers changed from selling furniture to the grocery business. Following a 1923 decline in business in Rockford, Charlie left the partnership and moved to Tekoa, Washington to start a grocery store on his own. The Tekoa Mottern's Grocery was successful and lasted until Charlie's death in 1934. Dave's store in Rockford went broke during the Depression.

The second brother, James Montgomery, had also learned the general mercantile business at the Rockford Merc. When he had earned enough capital, he moved to Worley, Idaho and opened a Mottern's store there. The third brother, Clark Henry, was a partner in the Worley store until his wife became dissatisfied with living in Worley. They then moved to Newport, Washington where he opened a grocery. The Newport store was short-lived and Clark moved to Spokane and went to work for the city.

The fourth brother, Joseph Franklin, went to Pullman and got a degree in pharmacy. He was a partner in the Gould & Mottern Pharmacy in Rockford in 1913 before opening his own drug store there. The sixth and youngest brother, Benjamin Cleveland, also went to college at Pullman, later working as a highway engineer for the State of Idaho.

Jim Mottern's store at Worley was the main store on the Coeur d'Alene Indian Reservation. "Jim loved his store and was a very capable small town businessman with a good mind. He could quickly add columns of figures reading from across a counter upside down and remembered the cost of everything in his store, not needing to mark the price on any item for sale. His Mottern's Store was a general store with a cement floor that sold everything from food to clothing and jewelry.

Young children loved to explore all the interesting things in the display cases, shelves and barrels with their individual sights, textures and smells. The barrels contained crackers, cookies, beans, flour and many other bulk food items. Since small town stores in Northern Idaho / Eastern Washington functioned as a credit institution in addition to being a general store, Jim kept an account ledger for each customer. He would bring the ledger out for every purchase and enter the items and amounts by hand and have it ready each payday to settle open accounts. [His son,] Ben Mottern was told in 1987 by a

long time Worley resident that his father kept many people alive during the depression by extending them credit to buy food and then postponing payment until the customer had money to pay.



"Jim was an active businessman. The night in 1928 a fire burned down the Worley store, he drove to Spokane four hours away, purchased replacement goods, returned to Worley where he restocked a different store and opened at 7:00 am the next morning. He maintained a successful business despite competition which included a store run by his wife's cousin. The Worley, Idaho store was the center of Mottern family life and the family never ate a meal together as someone was always working the store. Jim opened at 7:00 am and turned it over to his brother Dave in the mid-morning. He then walked across the street to his home, took a nap, had lunch and then walked



Worley Meat Market, 1920s. Photo by Jim Mottern.

back across the street to the store to relieve Dave. Later Dave would relieve Jim in the afternoon for another nap and one of them would close the store at 8:00 pm. The store was open every day of the year including Christmas and functioned as a center of town society. The old Worley store is still operating under a different name but the family home across from it on main street burned down in the 1980s."

The family history book indicates that the Mottern's stores used some common items to reduce expenses. The book shows a receipt from Motterns, Rockford, Tekoa, & Worley. On the back is the slogan "If not satisfied, bring it back". Jim Mottern was a strong supporter of his community and was a regular advertiser in the Worley newspaper, the **Go-Getter**. The Mottern book shows an interesting Sports Program from the Worley Seventh Annual Celebration, June 9, 1922. Prizes for some of the races included merchandise from Motterns (a pair of overalls, a pair of ladies gloves) and other token-using businesses (candy from Garrett's, a knife from Jaeger's, \$2.50 in trade – probably tokens

- from Garrett's, a 5-pound pail of lard (!) from Worley Meat Market).

My thanks to Jim Mottern for writing this interesting family history book and for making parts of it available to me for this newsletter. Hopefully we will turn up other tokens from this pioneer Idaho business. I am certain that there were 5¢, 25¢, 50¢ and \$1 denominations as well as the 10¢.

Riverview Guernsey Dairy

Greg Manos had attributed a maverick found there to Burley based on an embossed milk bottle and recollections of local people he had visited. The token reads: RIVERVIEW / GUERNSEY DAIRY / PHONE 65J2 / GOLDEN / GUERNSEY MILK // GOOD FOR 1/2 PT. CREAM 25mm Rd (ch) Al. That was okay, but then Dean Rasmussen came up with a very similar token found in the Twin Falls area. The difference was Dean's token had a different telephone number, 0192J2. Now, I wanted to find a listing in a telephone directory to see if I could understand what was going on.

Unfortunately there are no such directories for Burley in the Idaho Historical and Genealogical Library, so I turned to the newspapers on microfilm. The **Burley Bulletin** of May 2, 1935 had a nice ad which show that the business did indeed have two telephone numbers. My presumption now that I see that the Gochmour Brothers owned the business, is that they had two residences at the dairy with a separate line in each. Diversity in communications was important to them. The ad also states that they had been in business for 24 years in 1935.



Probably most collectors are aware how dairy tokens were used, but it bears repeating anyway. For many years the milkman was a regular early-morning visitor to doorsteps in town, leaving fresh milk and cream in bottles. Many dairies provided insulated milk boxes in case the residents did not bring it in before the morning warmed up. The order for milk was left on a note or with a small device like a semaphore in the top of the bottle. Rather than keeping track and sending a bill, the dairy wanted to be paid in advance, so cash was left in the bottle. Small boys soon learned that they could gain quite a bit of candy money by getting up early and making the rounds of their neighborhood before the milkman did. So the solution was to use tokens which doubled as the order form. The family would just leave the appropriate number of tokens, good for the products they wanted. Most dairy tokens are for quarts of milk and pints or half-pints of cream.

Henry Cigar Store

Greg Manos recently told me that the Blackfoot newspaper had reported someone there had found a maverick from the Henry Cigar Store, identical to one he had gotten from the area. A Blackfoot woman later wrote in, recognizing the business as that of her father. After thinking about the name, I recalled some work I have been doing on an update to Kendall Ballard's listing of Hemenway & Moser cigar store tokens. I found that when the H & M company bought out Fred Murphey's chain of cigar stores, they bought all except the Blackfoot store. That one Fred Murphey sold to a man named Henry Giles, who changed the name from "The Gem" or "Fred Murphey No. 1" to the Henry Cigar Store. More to follow on these businesses.

A Recently-Issued "token"

At a January, 1999 basketball game between the University of Idaho and Boise State University, small pom-poms were passed out at the door. The handle was of molded plastic with a punch-out 32mm "token" good at Pizza Hut restaurants: buy one, get one free until 2/8/99. This particular piece is more like the many coupons Pizza Hut uses than it is a token, but the idea could (and probably will) be used as a true "good-for" by some business in the future. The piece is white with blue lettering. The reverse is blank.



Wallace in July

Finally, as you plan your calendar for this summer, mark the weekend of July 24 for our rendezvous in Wallace. Expect to see some preliminary information on this event from Mike Fritz and Dick Magnuson within the next few months. I know Bob Berg is designing a useful souvenir, and everyone is building up their trading stock so they can bring home some exciting additions to their token collections. Keep tuned for more on this, our "Third Annual" function.

Next month look for an article on buying and selling tokens and other stuff via one of the most popular sites on the Internet. Ron Haberman and Robert Higdern are writing a story for us all. There may also be a section regarding whether we should make a "gentlemen's agreement" among us not to bid against each other. Anyone having thoughts on the subject, please let me know!

I'm sorry this issue is a bit late, but my printer has been giving me fits. It had a piece of ink-soaked fuzz it was rubbing back and forth across the paper as it printed, so I endeavored to clean it. I found and removed the fuzz, but can't seem to get the registration right when I print graphics. What a pain!

One last thing: If you are keeping a file of the **Idaho Trade Token Newsletter** and would like me to punch them for a three-ring binder, I can do so. It will be all or none of them, though. Likewise, if you don't want the sheets stapled, I can do that as well. Let me know your wishes and I will do what the majority wants starting with the next issue.

Best regards,

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